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*Notes on a hitherto unknown Exegetical, Theological, and Philosophical Commentary to the Pentateuch, composed by ABOO MANZUR AL-DHAMARI (מנצור אל־דמארי); with Appendices containing Hebrew and Arabic Extracts. A contribution to the critical study of Maimuni's writings, by ALEXANDER KOHUT, D.D., Ph.D., New York City (1892).—The Columbia College MS. of Megilla (Babylonian Talmud), examined by MAX L. MARGOLIS, A.M., Ph.D. With an autotype facsimile. New York, 1892.*

THE European libraries offer nothing new concerning Rabbinical literature in Yemen since our sketch of it was written in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW (Vol. III., pp. 604 to 626). Light on this subject comes now from America. Dr. A. Kohut, who has now successfully finished his important edition of the *Arukh*, of which we hope this periodical will, sooner or later, give an appreciative notice, has also turned his attention towards the Judaico-Yemenitic literature, beginning with the description of the Midrash of Mansûr al-Dhamari. The family of this name (derived probably from the locality Dhamar, mentioned several times by Hamdani (ed. D. H. Müller, index), had, as was usual in Jewish families in the Middle Ages, and even in modern times, the gift of learning. We know, at present, three members of this family as compilers of Midrashim, viz., our author; Said ibn David (Saadyah, son of David); and the physician Yahya ibn Suleimân (Judah, son of Solomon). The compilation by the last of these, entitled מדרש החפץ, is extant in MS. in the libraries of the British Museum, of Oxford, and Berlin; that by the second, with the title of מדרש הביאור, has not yet been found, unless it is identical with the Arabic commentary on the Pentateuch, with different titles for the various books of the Pentateuch, by Saad ben David (Saadyah, son of David), hat-Themani (of Yemen), extant in the Bodleian Library (see the index of the Catalogue, col. 969). We have formerly said (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, Vol. III., p. 614) that he was the son of David, author of a Midrash which may be the Midrash hag-Gadol, although not quoted under this title by later compilers of Midrashim. But, from the fact that Daûd al-Lawâni, the compiler of a Midrash MS. of the Bodleian Library, mentions, amongst his authorities of later Midrashim, in the first place, the Midrash of the learned David al-Adeni, and does not quote the Midrash hag-Gadol, numerous MSS. of which existed at Yemen, we may safely suppose that the Midrash compiled by David of Aden is identical with the Midrash hag-Gadol, of which Mr. Schechter pre-

pares a critical edition. That Saadyah of Yemen is silent about the Midrash of his supposed father, is strange; but his commentary, being more exegetic and homiletic than Midrashic, Saadyah had no occasion to mention it. Anyhow, we were wrong in saying, on the authority of Mr. Deinard's short catalogue of his MSS., that David's father was R. Amram. Dr. Kohut informs us in his present essay that the name of David ben Amram is given arbitrarily by Mr. Deinard on the binding of his MS of a part of the Midrash hag-Gadol—a name which is not found in the MS. itself. Thus our statement (*JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, Vol. III, p. 615), that none of the MSS. known of this Midrash bear the name of the compiler, stands firm; but from the quotation mentioned above (p. 338) it is certain that David's Midrash was a prominent one, and was perhaps, therefore, styled by later compilers "the great Midrash," as is the case with the Midrash Genesis Rabbah, which is quoted as the Midrash of R. Oshiah, and with the Midrash attributed to R. Moses had-Darshan. (See the *Expositor*, February and March, 1888, p. 102, *sqq.*) Midrash *rabbu de rabbah*, or Midrash *Rabbathi*. The second later Midrash, mentioned by David al-Lawâni, is the סֵפֶר אֱלֶעָקוֹל, "lamp of wisdom," by our Mansûr, which is to be found amongst Mr. Deinard's MSS. The name of the author is not given in it; but from this title found in the MS., and identical with that given by Lawâni, Dr. Kohut has ingeniously recognised the Midrash of Mansûr. Before beginning the very detailed description of it, Dr. Kohut introduces a short one of other MSS., in the possession of Mr. Deinard, already mentioned briefly in our essay on Jewish Yemen literature, according to the printed list with which Mr. Deinard had favoured us. Mansûr's quotations from predecessors are not numerous; besides Talmudic literature and the Masorah, he refers to the mystical Midrash on the letters of the alphabet, attributed to R. Aqiba, with the title of פֶּרֶשׁ הָאוֹתוֹת, to Saadyah Gaon's book of creeds, to ibn Isaiab, and mostly to Maimonides' (with the strange epithet of מִשְׁנֵה הַזֶּמֶן) Book of Precepts, the commentary on the Mishna and the Guide. For all these Mansûr gives the Arabic text, but not literally, perhaps only from memory, which is natural in a country where MSS. of these works were not always accessible. The חִיבוּר הַחֻזָּקָה is called here, as usual, in the East by the name of חִיבוּר. The third part of the Guide (chaps. xxxii.-l.), as Dr. Kohut has ingeniously and clearly made out, is sometimes quoted with the title of נִזְוֵי אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיל, "part of the cause," because this part explains the reasons of some Precepts.

We have already stated (*JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, III, p. 620) that the Yemen Rabbis were pretty well acquainted with Moham-

medan literature,<sup>1</sup> which is fully confirmed by the works of Mansûr. Dr. Kohut gives the following references to authors and books made by Mansûr:—1. The כתאב אלמסאלך, probably the geographical work of one of the following Arabic authors, viz., Bakri, ibn Hauqal, Ishakhri, or ibn Khordadbah. 2. The כתאב אכבאר מצר history of Egypt, by Aboo Salt, mentioned in Hadji Khala's bibliographical Dictionary (ed. Flügel, t. I., p. 190). 3. אלתקליר, by the great philosopher, Aboo Japhar Mohammed ben Musa al Ardebili, not mentioned by Hadji Khalfa. Also from Hariri and an anonymous poet. Next come extracts from Mansûr's Midrash, where peculiar explanations are given. The colophons of each book of the Pentateuch are also peculiar. Very interesting are the two appendices, which are the following:—*a.* Hebrew selections, mostly legendary matter (מעשיות), which may turn out useful to Folklorists. *b.* Arabic selections, amongst which one is important for liturgical matter according to the Yemenite rite. If the Arabic text is sometimes not as correct as one would desire, we must take into consideration that Dr. Kohut made his extended extracts from a unique MS., and his object was more to make known the contents of the Midrash than Mansûr's Arabic style.

Dr. Margolis, who has already made an excellent start with his dissertation on Rashi's commentary on the tractate of Erubin according to a Yemen MS., now in the library of Columbia College, New York, gives us in the present monograph an interesting description of the Yemen MS. containing the tractate מנלה, MS., of Columbia College, acquired from Mr. Deinard (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, III., p. 613; and Kohut, op. cit., p. 9). The result of his painstaking collation is, according to his own words, "that in ten double pages of the printed text the six sources (*i.e.*, the five MSS., viz., two at Munich, one at Oxford, a fourth in the British Museum, and a fifth at Columbia College), and the Pesaro edition, varied one from the other in 1,751 cases." It is evident that the Talmud MSS. now in New York will have to be utilised for an appendix to the *Varia Lectiones*, which were left uncompleted by the lamented N. R. Rabinowitz; we hope that Columbia College will be so generous as to lend these MSS. to some European library, in case Rabinowitz's work should be continued. We mention, with reference to such continuation, that the Bodleian Library has lately acquired many old fragments of MSS. of various parts of the Babylonian Talmud, which

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Steinschneider (*Bibl. Mathematica*, 1892, p. 60) says that the work תסהל (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, III., p. 621) is only known from the quotation in the Yemen Hebrew MS.

no doubt ought to be collated, and Oxford would therefore be the most convenient place for preparing the continuation. But, before all, a Mæcenas ought to be found who will acquire from the Rabbino-witz family the collations made chiefly from the Vatican MSS. for the tractates not yet published. The scholar who will undertake this difficult task will certainly be found; and we would suggest, in the first place, Mr. Schechter, if adequate compensation for time and labour can be offered. Unfortunately, the old spirit of rich Jews is nearly gone, and very few care for the propagation of Jewish literature, as far as our experience goes. We have only to look at the subscription list for the publications of the *מקיצי נרדמים*; England is there pitifully represented. Not much better is the case with France. German and Austrian Jews show a better feeling, but most of the subscribers are our unfortunate and poor correlative in Russia; thus the Talmud saying, "Be regardful to the sons of the poor, for from them comes out learning of the Thorah" (Bab. Talm., Tractat. *N'darim*, fol. 81a), is confirmed. To return to Dr. Margolis. Yemen MSS. present new abbreviations (e.g., *שור"ש*, accompanied before or after by the equally enigmatic letters *בנילט ש"כ*, Margolis, p. 4), besides a number of scribes, owners and witnesses of transfer of book from one hand to another; these, as it is known, belong mostly to the learned class, and it is worth while enumerating them. We have collected them all, including some from MSS. not yet catalogued, as well as the geographical names, frequently given in the Colophons of MSS. Many of them are not mentioned in Jakut's geographical dictionary, neither in Hamḥani's history of Yemen, nor in that of Omārah al-Hakim, edited and translated into English by Mr. H. C. Kay. Perhaps M. Joseph Halévy and Dr. Glaser will be able to help to identify these when they appear in print in one of the next numbers of our QUARTERLY. That it is by no means certain that the late Jacob Saphir, Joseph Halévy, the late Mr. Shapiro, and some anonymous dealers have acquired all the MSS. in Yemen, is proved by the MSS. which came only two years ago into Mr. Deinard's possession. Not all localities of Yemen have been visited by the above-mentioned learned travellers and dealers; the Jews in Yemen were, and are probably still, spread over a part of the country not yet explored. On the other hand, the MSS. brought hitherto were most likely in possession of the poorer synagogues and individuals. It would, therefore, be advisable that influential Rabbis should communicate with the richer Jews in Yemen, offering remuneration to induce them to exchange their MSS. for printed books, which are scarce among them, or at least to allow copies to be made of MSS. of the Talmud, Midrashim, and other early productions. We may mention on this

occasion that the Vienna Library, according to Professor D. H. Müller, has acquired from Yemen a copy of R. Jonah ben Jannah's dictionary (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, III., p. 613). These communications could reach the Yemen Jews through either the medium of the *Alliance Israelite* in Paris, or from Jerusalem, where some Jews from Yemen are resident. But this ought to be done soon, or it may be too late, as was the case with the Bible MSS. in the Synagogue of Hamadan in Persia, where the old MSS. became the prey of the flames. Researches for MSS. ought to be made through the above-mentioned media in Persia, since the Jews produced a comparatively rich literature there, as can be seen from recent acquisitions in the British Museum. Only lately a Pentateuch copy, which was written in the ninth century at the latest, a century earlier than the so-called *Codex Babylonicus*, now in St. Petersburg, which is dated 916 A.D., was acquired there.

A. NEUBAUER.

*The Canon of the Old Testament* By Professor RYLE. London, 1892.

THE last two years have brought forward not less than three works dealing with the question of the formation of the Canon of the Old Testament. Two of them belong to Continental scholars, Professor Buhl in Leipzig, and Professor Wildeboer in Groningen, the former of whom may be said to be very accurate, whilst the latter, though very suggestive, has no great claims to exactness. In his citations from the Rabbinic literature in particular, Professor Wildeboer appears to us to rely too much on the works of his predecessors. Otherwise such a mis-translation as is given on page 53, note 2, or such an erroneous statement about the term *Kethubim Achronim* as is made on page 132, could never have occurred. The third, which will be the subject of this short notice, is by Professor Ryle, of Cambridge, and not only combines suggestiveness with exactness, but is also fuller in its information than either of the other mentioned works.

Professor Ryle's book is described on the title-page as an "Essay on the gradual growth and formation of the Hebrew Canon of Scripture." This gradual growth is best seen, according to the author from the tri-partite division of the Old Testament into Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiographa. But gradual growth does not only apply to these three groups at large, but also to every book of the twenty-four in particular which constitute the Old Testament, each book having, according to the modern school, a history of its own before it